

Guanfacine XR (GXR)

Generic: None in Canada

Brand: Intuniv XR®

Purpose: Intuniv XR® is a selective alpha2a-adrenergic receptor agonist. It is not a stimulant. This class of medication targets receptors in the brain and may decrease delay in signals sent between brain cells.

Benefit: Effect of treatment may not be reached until 4 weeks of taking this medication. Non-stimulants have a slower onset than stimulant medications, but they have an established safety profile like stimulant medications.

How to take: Should be swallowed whole. **Do not chew, crush, or break this medication.** Do not take with a high fat meal. Do not eat grapefruit or grapefruit products with this medication.

Who should take Intuniv XR®? Generally indicated in all ADHD patients 6-17 years old.

How does Intuniv XR® work? The brain communicates through cells called neurons. This medication may improve delays in the neuron's communication with one another, which may lead to increased behavioral control.

How long does Intuniv XR® last in your body? Up to 24h. It may help people who have continued symptoms in the late evening or early morning.

Dosages: Tablets are available in 1, 2, 3, and 4mg



Figure 1: Quick Guide to ADHD Medication (Vincent 2019)

Changes in dose: Dose changes are typically done slowly (i.e., every 14 days) depending on how someone responds to the medication.

Important! DO NOT stop taking this medication without talking to your doctor. Stopping it suddenly could put you at risk of dangerously high blood pressure. Taking Intuniv XR® may alter your ability to drive or operate machinery. Talk to your prescriber if you are planning to become pregnant or start breastfeeding. Do not take any new medications, supplements, or vitamins without talking to your prescriber first. Do not drink alcohol or take other medications that may cause dizziness or sleepiness without talking to your prescriber first. Make sure to stay hydrated and not become overheated on this medication.

What if you miss a dose? If you miss two doses, contact your prescriber to see if they would like to restart or decrease the dose.

Common Side Effects for Alpha-2 Agonist (i.e., Guanfacine XR):

- BP and HR decrease
- BP and HR increase when stopped suddenly
- Appetite suppression (not common)
- Constipation/Diarrhea
- Dry mouth
- GI upset – Upper abdominal pain in some people
- Nausea/vomiting
- Anxiety (not common)
- Dysphoria/irritability (uncommon)
- Headache
- Initial insomnia (not common)
- Somnolence
- Skin reactions (not common)

(CADDRA, 2020, p. 71)

Remember: This is not a complete list of side effects. Talk to your prescriber if you have any side effects that are bothersome and do not go away after a few weeks. **Never give your medication away to someone else.**

Note: Illustrations are not representative of size of ADHD capsules.

References:

1. CADDRA - Canadian ADHD Resource Alliance: Canadian ADHD Practice Guidelines, 4.1 Edition, Toronto ON; CADDRA 2020.
2. Medscape. (n.d.). *Guanfacine (Rx)*. <https://reference.medscape.com/drug/intuniv-tenex-guanfacine-342384#10>
3. Takeda Canada Inc. (2020, December 3). *Product Monograph Including Patient Medication Information*. (pp. 35-40). PDF. https://pdf.hres.ca/dpd_pm/00059142.PDF
4. Vincent, Annick. (2019, September). *Quick Guide to ADHD Medication in Canada*. PDF. https://attentiondeficit-info.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/adhd_en_canada_september2019.pdf